

A CHARGE, 5

DELIVERED AT A VISITATION
OF THE
CLERGY AND CHURCHWARDENS
OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF YORK.

*Held at Toronto, on Tuesday, Sept. 4; at
Hamilton, on Wednesday, Sept. 5, and
at London, on Thursday, Sept. 6, 1855.*

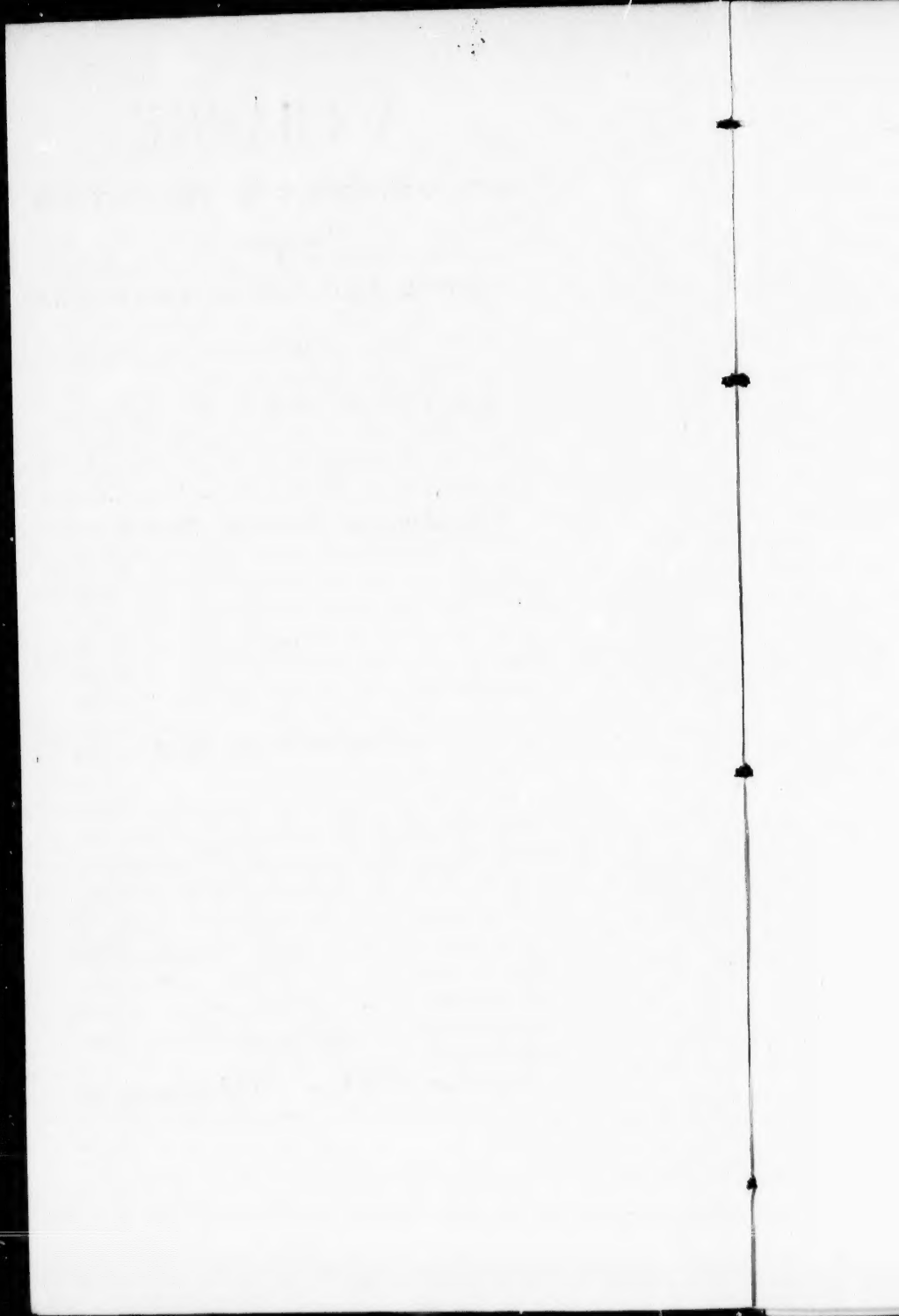
BY

The Venerable A. N. Bethune, D. D.,

ARCHDEACON OF YORK.

TORONTO:
HENRY ROWSELL.

1855.



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Delivered at Visitations of the Clergy and Churchwardens of the Archdeaconry of York, held at Toronto, on Tuesday, Sept. 4; at Hamilton on Wednesday, Sept. 5; and at London, on Thursday, Sept. 6, 1855.

BY THE VEN. A. N. BETHUNE, D. D.,
Archdeacon of York.

Rev. Brethren, and Mr. Churchwardens:—The lapse of three years brings me again to the duty of assembling the Clergy and Churchwardens of this Archdeaconry, to receive the customary charge; and we may hope that, with the Divine blessing, the counsels thus offered, and the deliberations that may ensue, will not be without benefit to ourselves, and advantage to the Church at large.

The ground which by usage, I am permitted to occupy, in making these addresses to the Clergy and Laity, though in some degree very wisely restricted, is nevertheless wide enough to allow of the discussion of topics affecting the nearest interests of the Church, and to which it cannot but be advantageous to our holy cause, on every lawful opportunity, to give a patient and prayerful attention.

Since last assembling you in the spring of

1852, I have been enabled to make a personal visitation of nearly every parish and missionary station within the bounds of the Archdeaconry; and it is my intention, at the earliest opportunity, to complete the little that had been unavoidably omitted. I have been permitted, in many cases, to observe no inconsiderable benefits resulting from these visits to individual parishes,—in the aid they have served to afford to the praise-worthy exertions of the Clergy and Churchwardens, and others officially engaged in promoting objects and enterprises closely connected with the welfare of the Church. The counsels and suggestions offered at such times in relation to the building, enlarging, or improving of Churches—to the better and more edifying maintenance of public worship—and to the more liberal support of the Clergy, have, as a general rule, been satisfactorily responded to; and in all cases, I have to express my thankful acknowledgements both to the Clergy and Laity, for the very kind manner in which these visits have been received, and for the obliging services and courtesies which, on such occasions, have been uniformly extended.

In desiring that the intercourse connected with these official visits should be as free and unrestricted as possible, I have to lament, for my own sake, that they cannot be more frequent, and more protracted when they occur; but viewing the space of country that is to be traversed, during the very limited period in each year in which such visits, with

convenience to all parties, could be made, it would not, I am sure, be expected that much more, in reference to this special duty could be done.

I have said that ample scope is given, in such addresses as the present, for profitable counsel and deliberation; and to verify this statement, it is only necessary to remind you that I am required in discharging this duty, to treat of all that concerns the maintenance of public worship in that appropriate and edifying manner, which it has been the care of the Church, guided by Divine revelation, to provide.

I. In viewing this obligation, our first care necessarily will be, to provide a suitable place for the holy and refreshing work of the sanctuary. Time was, when the places in which the people of God assembled for this blessed and heart cheering duty, were very humble and inappropriate. When they had escaped from the host of Pharoah, there was no sheltering temple for the Israelites in which to pour forth the strain of grateful praise for their miraculous deliverance.— They were glad to sing their songs of thankfulness on the margin of the sea, which had been made to open for their escape from their pursuing enemies. In the wilderness, the tabernacle, of limited dimensions and hasty construction, was the best that could be supplied for the thank-offering or the sacrifice of sin; and it was long before the spacious and costly temple at Jerusalem stood forth as an appropriate dwelling-place for the king of kings.

in the early days of Christianity, the sequestered cave, or the unnoticed upper-room, was the best that the followers of the cross could have for the worship of their God and Saviour; and often, that homage must be paid, and the holy mysteries of their religion joined in, before daylight woke their watchful and unrelenting enemies to persecution. Ages passed before a testimony could be borne to the world of the Christian appreciation of their faith, by having its truths proclaimed and its ordinances celebrated in spacious and costly sanctuaries.

In new lands, but just reclaimed from the wilderness, and whose inhabitants are struggling with the difficulties and privations of early settlement, the house of prayer will of necessity bear its likeness to the edifices of rude and hasty construction, which are the best the people can erect for their own accommodation. But as population advances, and wealth increases, and comforts are multiplied, the log school-house, or the ungrudged best room in the shanty, will give place to the neat, and spacious, and chastely decorated Church. And so in the past few years a most gratifying improvement is to be observed in our edifices of prayer—as well in the rapid increase of their number, as in the style of their construction.

A Christian community will, indeed, always feel an earnest longing to substitute the special and consecrated sanctuary for the merely temporary place of worship. They will have a strong desire to set apart an exclusive spot for holy ministrations—a place

where no words are heard but those of prayer and praise—no lessons taught but those of Christian faith and practice. For we must be pained by the incongruity of having the rites of Christianity administered this hour in a place, where perhaps the next hour will be the exhibition of “foolish talking and jesting,”—of harsh political declamation—and it may be of ungodly and blasphemous conversation. And it is not well to be forced to have recourse to a building, even set apart as such, in which the declaration of Catholic truth on one portion of the Lord’s day, is followed, it may be a few hours after, by the outpourings of heretical teaching: where the plea of unity is succeeded by the advocacy of religious division; where there is an unhappy blending of truth and error—a presentation of the Church at one time in her pureness and oneness, and the Church at another as mutilated by the strife and jealousy of contending parties. These are reasons for providing in all cases, as speedily as possible, a place (applicable to no other use) for worshipping God and enjoying all ministrations and ordinances of our holy

And there is always much in the aspect and appointments of his hallowed house of prayer—the special home and resting place of believers—which wins and binds us to the work of piety and devotion. There is, or should be, nothing there to indicate the world’s business or the pursuits of time; but every thing pointing in type and symbol to Him that ruleth in heaven and earth—every

thing to rouse and maintain the spirit that befits eternity.

The principals in which we have been nurtured, resting as they do upon God's holy word, would, if faithfully adhered to, preserve us from the extremes into which, as respects the duties and privileges of Divine worship, men are prone to fall. We have here, as the experience of the times teaches us, a double error to avoid and contend against. We have, on the one hand, superstition, native in some degree to man, and like every other infirmity demanding the correction of heavenly grace, driving believers into a mere material worship—no devotion in which the heart and understanding have not their legitimate share. And we have, on the other hand, the hard, ball scepticism, that crying evil of the age, denying to our material part its due co-operation in this holy work, and refining away its duties into a sort of ethereal feeling, which excludes too surely the practical work of worship from the daily life.

In the former case, our Lord's own teaching and appointments show that the work of devotional duty is not to be overburdened by undue ceremonial, nor its spirit crushed beneath an overpowering weight of material covering. The outward and visible ordinances are few and simple, which he has specially enjoined as symbols of the faith of his Church, and the channel of means through which His grace should operate to the improvement and perfection of the believer. And it was from a thoughtful and judicious

appreciation of our Lord's meaning in these institutions, that the pure and reformed branch of his Church to which we belong has manifested so much simplicity in the order of her devotional work.

I may venture, my brethren, to analyze this question briefly. Where there is too much of a material dress upon religion—where the work of devotion is mixed up with an undue preponderance of ceremonies and forms; the mind and spirit become, as we may say, materialized: the thoughts and feelings acquire, as it were, a corporeal grossness: there is a sensuality and earthiness engendered in the affections thus employed. This is but natural, where the eye and ear, for instance, are too exclusively engaged: impressions in this case, play around the senses, and stop short there: the inner man is not thoroughly reached; the inner life is not adequately affected.

That I am not uttering here a theory only, or making a mere fanciful deduction, is evident from what we see and know of the practical influence of a system of religion conducted on that almost exclusively material, or sensual basis. We find in the countries and amongst the people where it prevails, much outward devotion, and much time spent in the work; but the inward soul and life appears not to be correspondently affected; there is but a plaything as it were, with the sympathies and passions of the sensual nature. This is evident, as well from the almost total estrangement from the outward and practical duties of

devotion of the better educated and intellectual classes in such communities, as from the large amount of vice and crime existing amongst the ruder masses, in comparison with those countries where a system of religion more congenial to the spiritual part of man is pursued. In Roman Catholic countries—the proportion varying, of course, with the influence of climate and the habits of the people—we find upon authority which is hardly to be questioned, that the crime of murder alone is from five to fifty fold more prevalent than in Great Britain, for example, where the vast preponderance of the population is Protestant. We have, indeed, but to look at the moral condition of Italy and Spain, in comparison with that of our own favoured mother country, to be assured of the fact, that the tendency of their system of religion is to leave the inner man comparatively untouched, and to centralize religion in mere animal emotion. Superstition is the necessary consequence; and that easy, but dangerous credulity, which assumes that a penance can atone for a crime, and that the priest's word can assure a pardon.

But we must guard ourselves against a one-sided or partial view of this weighty question; we must beware of running into the opposite extreme. The abuse of a good thing does not justify us in neglecting its use,—much less does it warrant its entire rejection. There must, in corporeal beings, be a legitimate action for the senses; if the body must take its part with the spirit in

the work of religion, then must the body have its appropriate exercise. And the Lord of all wisdom has himself enjoined the employment of visible signs and emblems in religion, in condescension to the cravings and necessities of our weaker nature.

From not carefully considering this natural want of our corporeal being, and neglecting a suitable provision for it, many practical evils follow. An abstract contemplative religion, a mere intellectual and spiritual exercise, a simple bare perception by faith, engenders mysticism, and by and by indifference, and at last infidelity. With occupation given, in the work of religion, to only one part of man, the other is soon overburdened and diseased. The appetite being all for the intellectual, the craving in this case soon comes to be merely for what may gratify the "itching ear," and pander to the intellectual taste; and soon, when this kind of appetite cannot be satisfied, there is a sliding off altogether from the work of religion, because people have measured its value by its influence upon their understandings and imaginations.

And the direct effect of this is, that prayer comes to be undervalued, and the work of devotion irreverently and negligently joined in. In spite, perhaps of what they would be willing to acknowledge, such persons come to God's house almost exclusively for the gratification they may derive from the sermon, the Prayers are a secondary consideration, and in many cases, alas, no consideration at all.

Now this intellectual and mystical kind of exercise into which the work of devotion has, in so many cases, been allowed to degenerate, is a cause of the great carelessness, and the great irregularity, which members of most Protestant communions evince in regard to the ordinary duties of public worship, in comparison to those of the Romish faith. It is true that these last are erroneous in their conception of the effect and result of such devotional acts; but the former are, in another sense, just as erroneous in taking that view of religious duty which drives them from its practical work altogether. This must indeed, be a defective view, when it leads to such wrong and inconsistent action amongst Christian professors,—that so large a number in every community, who have been dedicated to Christ in baptism and formally enrolled as his soldiers and servants, almost give up going to Church altogether; that others content themselves with a rare and very irregular attendance; that so many are listless and indifferent when they are there, that so few will avail themselves of any other than a Sunday service, and that whole families live on and die, without becoming partakers of the Lord's Supper.

From such a system and such a course, infidelity must follow; and it would not be hard to make a fair comparison between infidelity and superstition, as to their respective evil influences upon the tone of society and the welfare of mankind. In their respective devotees this evil influence

no doubt works differently. The one are driven on to crime by animal emotions, which religion has not adequately restrained; the other, in the exercise of an intellectual cunning which the force of religion has not been permitted to counteract, are unscrupulous in the commission of frauds and wickednesses, which though not so apparent and palpable, are just as subversive of the healthy tone and well being of society.

The view of the practical work of devotion and of religious exercises generally, which our pure branch of the Church of Christ inculcates, would, if carried out, keep from both these extremes. We should thus be devout without superstition, and religious without being sceptical. From the pious occupation of the whole man, sense would gain no victory over the inward and spiritual life; and we should be saved from the bareness and desolation of a mere speculative faith. The mind and spirit would not, then, be left to wander off alone, and brood by itself, and gather up fancies, and stray into regions of doubt, and forsake Scripture, and adopt reason, and give up God, and lose heaven. If we use well the religious advantages that are provided for us, and guide ourselves by the sound principal and judicious rule which our Church has laid down, we should guard ourselves against all these evils. From a sober and judicious view of its spirit and its claims, we should come to a healthful and united action in the work and life of Christian piety.

II. We are drawn next, my brethren, to

a consideration of the means of providing for the maintenance of Divine worship. The house of God, we are agreed, must not be left to stand in nakedness and isolation, but must have its steady and appropriate ministrations; and to secure these we must have the accredited dispensers of His sacraments, and authorized expositors of His word. And these, as in all past times, must be a class by themselves—separated to the work of the ministry—removed, as far as possible, from the cares and studies of the world, freed from its social jarrings, and kept away from its corroding speculations either for gain or popularity. And to secure the perpetuity of this class—a class appointed to remind continually of heaven, while their abode and duty is on earth—the hand pointing steadily there, while the foot rests temporarily here, we must have a maintenance for them separate and fixed, and free as possible from the precariousness and uncertainty which marks all human pursuits and professions.

The Divine wisdom, as we often have had occasion to remark, has pointed out the proportion of our worldly substance, which, from year to year, should be applied to the maintenance of the ordinances and worship of this sanctuary. What was a settled obligation under the Jewish dispensation, came to be a recognized duty under the Christian; what was appointed under the law as an equitable and necessary rule, would, on the same ground, be maintained under the Gospel. The support of religious

ministrations is as much a duty now as then; and there is nothing to show that less cost should be expended for them in these days of greater light and privilege, than when the faithful groped and struggled in the gloom of types and shadows. The sacrifice which cost him nothing, David, in ruder and less enlightened times, shrunk from offering: the clearer hopes and promises of Christianity should not permit us to make offerings now, involving less expenditure and self-denial.

It is no sign of a purer and most earnest Christian spirit, that what God had made a bounded obligation, should now become a discretionary offering. But if human restrictions have, in our case, been removed, the Divine rule is not on that account abolished. There may be the absence of direct enactments to compel the payment; but the force of conscience should be as strong as any human law to bind us to the obligation. We cannot, with safety to our souls, deny to God's service and worship the proportion of our earthly gains or earnings which he has himself established by an equitable, and as we must believe, immutable rule; for we cannot gather, from any quarter, a hint or indication that it was meant to be abolished or varied.

With the admission that the divinely appointed rule of contribution to pious and charitable purposes is binding, a question may arise as to the application of this rule in practice. It may be argued that, from the change in the exterior circumstances of

the Church, growing out of the varying habits and organization of society, this appropriation should, at the present day, be considered to include every order of gifts to the sanctuary; every thing in short, that aims at the propagation and maintenance of the Gospel. I am unwilling to discuss this point of the subject, but would rather leave it to the conscientious feeling and action of individuals; contenting myself with the remark, that if this amount be regularly and systematically apportioned, its distribution through a variety of channels can hardly be thought to affect the soundness of the principal upon which it is bestowed. It can hardly matter whether the sum thus apportioned be paid directly as a voluntary offering, or, in common with this, through the medium of an organized association, or though some local and parochial compact in the shape of a pew-rent, or other self-imposed ecclesiastical charge.

There are differences of opinion in regard to the system of pews—not always very temperately or judiciously expressed—which may render a few remarks upon the subject desirable. Many regard the system as indispensable in the present position of the Church; and others, pleading ancient prescription, contend for their total abolition. The views of both parties are entitled to every respect and consideration, as there are obvious advantages, as well as disadvantages, attending the adoption of pews. A leading advantage consists in the important source of revenue which they are made to

constitute; a circumstance which, in the absence of any sufficient public endowment, must operate very strongly in favour of the system. And if a minister is to be supported to any considerable extent, by the direct contribution of the people whom he serves, this is much more satisfactorily obtained through the medium of a pew-rent than by a voluntary subscription.

Another advantage consists in the provision it secures for keeping households together during public worship, and thus assuring to children, while in the house of God, that oversight from their parents or guardians, which is indispensable to their orderly and devout behaviour. I could not conceive a greater misfortune to the rising generation, in towns especially, than the absence of this parental oversight and control during Divine service; but this cannot be exercised unless the means exist of keeping a family together while thus engaged.

On the other hand, as more room is usually allotted to families, on the pew system, than they are found habitually to occupy, we may consider that numbers of persons are excluded from the services of the sanctuary at the very time that there are actually sittings for them. This is one objection; and another is, that a distinction and exclusiveness is thus maintained in the house of God, very adverse to the charitable spirit of the Gospel. The privilege of a common and equal home—as the sanctuary should be regarded—appears to be marred if not wholly destroyed, by conceding to

the rich what is unattainable by the poor; by assigning to the one the best seats, because they can afford to pay for them, and yielding to the other such as are inferior, or perhaps depriving them of a seat altogether.

It is doubtful, however, whether in Churches ostensibly free to all, this kind of distinction does not sooner or later show itself. There will, as a rule, be a deference shown to rank and station, and it may be to mere wealth apart from prescriptive claim; and the probability is, that habitual occupation will generally be found, in such cases, to settle down into a sort of proprietorship.

Here, then where nothing is paid by any party for their seats, it will perhaps be discovered that the rich have a recognized preference to the poor; or that priority of occupation secures permanently the most eligible positions in the Church. We may, therefore, have the distinctions and partialities complained of, apart from the actual allotment of pews by sale or lease; or it may be sometimes, a very unseemly contest for seats in God's house, arising from the freedom of choice. And it is much to be apprehended that in a mixed population, such as our towns and larger villages contain, this indiscriminate selection of seats, while it might encourage a few more of the poorer classes to attend, would gradually lessen the attendance of the richer and more influential. The disorder and discomfort arising from the chance occupation of seats from

Sunday to Sunday, would, we have grounds, to fear, operate very injuriously upon the attendance of those who love regularity. and The desire, above all, the union of their families in the house of God. I am speaking here more particularly of towns; in a rural population, which varies little, and the complexion of which is generally more staid and orderly, the objection would hardly apply.

And yet we must not shut our eyes to the disadvantages adduced by the opponents of the pew system. We should correct, if we can, the fault of exclusiveness, so far as it is likely to operate against a sound practical Christianity; and, perhaps, the greater misfortune of excluding any from the house of God from the fact of families engaging more room than they can regularly occupy.

There are two ways of correcting the show of partiality attached to the present system of letting pews. One is, to throw them open annually to competition, so that an improvement in position may occasionally be secured by persons not advantageously accommodated; another is, that the lessees of pews should annually draw lots for those they are to occupy.

To the former method there are, undeniably, great objections, as it would inevitably and steadily give to the rich a preference over the poor. The highest bidder would obtain the best seat; and as a rule, the congregation, taking all its classes, would be worse off than before. The latter method

of appropriating sittings annually, or at stated periods, by lot—assuming that each bore an equal rent—would effectually meet the difficulty, if congregations could but be induced to adopt it. It would be very satisfactory to witness a trial, and the result of the experiment.

In regard to the disadvantage attendant on the present system, of excluding a large number from the Church, in consequence of families engaging more room than they can occupy; this might be obviated by the adoption of a plan which, though it may be a novel one, I do not consider impracticable; namely, consent on the part of lessees or proprietors to admit into their pews one or more persons who may be unable, from want of means or other cause to obtain this accommodation independently. This might easily be settled into a rule, and made to form a condition of lease or proprietorship. The immediate effect probably would be, the stated addition to the congregation of just as many as were thus accommodated; while it could not but serve to lessen the force of the feeling complained of, that the system of pew-letting fosters an exclusiveness and partiality in God's house. The plan, too, I consider a practicable one; for I am sure that a very considerable number in every congregation would be willing to extend such accommodation, not merely to their equals in society, but to the poor man also, or some portion of the poor man's family. The effect would be particularly beneficial, if in this way certain children or young

persons were provided with seats, who might not otherwise possess them. It would ensure their more regular attendance, and conduce, as all must admit, to their more reverent and orderly behaviour. Great and undoubted good to the rising generation, and to the Church at large, would result from the adoption of such an arrangement.

These, my brethren, are merely opinions and suggestions ; but if we would make any gain or advance in a disputed question like this, we must apply ourselves practically to the work in some such way as I have recommended. It will be in vain to set up theories and ideas, and deal with them as fundamental principles ; for while these may be unexceptionable in themselves, they would, from change of circumstances, be found impossible in practice. The great Apostle of the Gentiles himself drew a distinction between rules and duties that were the "commandment of the Lord," and such as were enjoined by his own authority or judgment ; in other words, he separated what was a Divine and unchangeable principle, from that which was recommended by the rulers of the Church as most conducive to present order and edification. And so, there would be modes in worship and rules for conducting the business of the sanctuary, which prevalent as they may have been in the primitive times, and conducive then, in the best judgment of the Church, to regularity and devotion. present views and modern customs would render not only inex-

pedient but unedifying. Conventional rules and usages will impart their hue even to subordinate ecclesiastical regulations ; and therefore, what would be suitable under a despotic government or a rude state of society, would scarcely be tolerated in a country of liberal polity and advanced civilization. Many things, indeed adopted in the Apostle's days, were soon dropped from the abuse to which, from human infirmity or the shifting phases of society, they became subject. I need but instance the feast of charity, the kiss of peace, and some subordinate offices in the Church,—that of deaconesses, for example,—which it was soon found inexpedient to retain. And it would be as difficult, and as unwise, to restore such customs now ; as well as to reestablish certain acts of discipline or re-introduce peculiar practices in divine worship, which, though they may have been sanctioned by medieval or even primitive usage, have doubtless in most cases fallen into disuse from the impossibility of maintaining them with any hope of edification or spiritual benefit. We may argue in like manner, in regard to the abolition of pews and perfect freedom in the use of Churches. It would be unwise and injurious to attempt to lay down a universal rule upon this point, or to settle as a principle what can only be safely advanced as a question of practical benefit.

Any thing like an authoritative regulation might be attended with an abuse and injury, which would far exceed the convenience of benefit that was expected to be

derived from it introduction. To compel the use of rules and customs, of secondary importance and involving no essential principle, which are contradictory to the spirit of the age and the structure of society, would be to realize the incongruity, so wisely applied by our Saviour, of putting a piece of new garment upon an old, "where the new maketh a rent, and the piece which was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old."

I have left myself, my brethren, but little space for adverting to the peculiar position in which, as respects pecuniary resources and prospects, the Church in this Diocese is now placed. Our lawful property having been wrested from us through the strength of an outcry and the vehemence of an opposition, which our most zealous friends felt themselves no longer able to withstand, we are reduced, for any firm or permanent endowment, to a dependence upon what can be made out of the sum yielded by the commutation of the stipends of the Clergy.—Viewing the wreck that has been inevitable it will be eminently beneficial if this Commutation fund can be retained in its integrity, and faith at the same time kept with the Clergy who have thrown their life annuities upon the hazard of this provision.

A systematic liberality, even on a moderate scale, would be found to secure both. The obtaining of five thousand pounds per annum by a voluntary contribution, would, it is believed, remove every risk of infringement upon this capital, or diminishing the stipends of the clergy. This sum, distributed

amongst one hundred parishes,—taking these at the lowest estimate,—would require from each an average contribution of only fifty pounds annually, or a capital sum of little more than eight hundred pounds. If there be some few parishes which could hardly give a fifth of this sum, there are not a few which could easily contribute five times the amount.

We can hardly, then, have any ground for fearing that the actual deficiency will not be made up: vigorous and united action, following the intended appeal of our venerated Diocesan, will insure, we must think, even more than what is stated to be necessary to place us in a secure position. For we can hardly be content, as a Diocese, with effecting merely the supply of a deficiency, and then stop short. Our population is not standing still; and the demand for laborers in the harvest of the Church will not, as years advance, be just what it is now. We must, then, face at once the duty of creating a fund which will be adequate to the steady increase of the number of our Missionaries.

But it is time to draw to a conclusion though there are many topics still to be dealt with. And I cannot conclude better than by referring briefly to the foundation of all Christian action,—the love of God, and the fear of God. His mercy impels us to the one; His truth urges to the other. And these motives unite and blend together, to assure the fulfilment of our allotted work. The one makes it pleasant, as a thank-offering which the best emotions of our nature

prompt us to make: the other renders it dutiful and imperative, even where the infirmity of the natural man might render it constrained or distasteful. We have talents committed to us,—some more, some less; and it should be our joy to apply them to our heavenly Master's honor: it will be our ruin eternally, if we wantonly misapply or neglect them.

As Christians, we have our peculiar privileges; and these require that we should be a "peculiar people." From being "children of wrath," we have become "children of grace;" but the grace by which we are saved through faith, indicates that, as God's workmanship, we are to be "zealous of good works."

We are bound to the service of our Lord in heaven, as being bought with the price of his blood: it would not, then, be either thankful in us, or safe, to show ourselves unfruitful servants. Our Master above has work for us to do, and we have solemnly covenanted to perform it: it will neither be right nor prudent in us to neglect our allotted task, and appear in his presence unable to give a satisfactory account of what we have done in the body for his kingdom and people.

We are, as Christians, and as Christian ministers especially, "stewards" of the highest and most weighty trust that can be committed to mortal men; and "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."—An inestimable and imperishable prize is set before us, as the achievement of the Re-

deemer's satisfaction and obedience ; but there must be a race, and combat, and struggle, to secure it. Nothing else than vigor and zeal, during the day of our work before the night cometh, will ensure us this address of welcome at the last, " Well done, good and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

